

## Come Follow Me Class Insights – 48 – Doctrine and Covenants 135-136, Part 1

I'm Taylor, and I'm Tyler. I'm Gerrit Dirkmaat. This is Book of Mormon Central's Come Follow Me Insights. Today, Doctrine and Covenants sections 135 and 136. We bring Gerrit Dirkmaat on; he is an expert in this time period of Church history and we are delighted to have you with us today.

Thanks for having me.

So Gerrit, as we jump in today, the last section that we covered was section 133 through 134 which both are completely out of their time – the historical setting in the Doctrine and Covenants, so we have to go back two episodes to when we – when we covered section 132 which was ending in July of 1843 and now all of a sudden we pick it up in section 135 and realize there's been no canonized revelations in that almost a year, that eleven month time period, and yet there are a lot of events taking place (overtalk) these eleven months, so – so help us set the stage for Carthage Jail, June 27, 1844.

That's a pretty tall order because there are a lot of events that happened during that time period. Probably the most important to note is that this is a time of increasing persecution of the Latter-day Saints in Nauvoo and it's – it's a time period in which the saints are becoming increasingly frustrated that they are not able to get people to help them in their difficulties that they have. They're still trying to get their lands back in Missouri. They're still petitioning the government. You know, most Latter-day saints are aware that Joseph went to D.C. and – and met at least briefly with the President at the time, Martin Van Buren and you know, however you want to say, you know your cause is just, we don't know exactly what words were said but what we do know is the federal government didn't help, so we know that help was not forthcoming.

Well, so as 1843 progresses, there's a couple of things going on that are – are leading to both internal and external tensions, so internally, there is increasing push-back to some of these very radical doctrines that Joseph Smith is

teaching. They're some of the ones that we, you know, prize as Latter-day Saints but to other members of the Church, especially some of those in Joseph's inner circle, they did not feel so good about it. So it's easy when you talk about this time period, to talk about the controversy surrounding plural marriage. And plural marriage is a big part of the controversies that are going on here, but they're not the only thing going on. There are a couple of other things that are going on as well.

Joseph is – is teaching things that are increasingly becoming difficult for traditional Christians to accept. One of the things that Latter-day Saints probably don't generally think of, one of those doctrines is the idea of baptisms for the dead. I would guess that most people think that baptism for the dead is like the greatest doctrine we have, like so God's fair and everyone can be saved, everyone has (overtalk) a chance, but to Latter-day Saints who grew up in these Christian cultures that were very adamant that if you did not have faith in Jesus in this life, you went to hell. It seemed a bridge too far and people, you know, left the Church over it.

Well Joseph's expanding on that even more so as he begins to teach more about the nature of God and as well as the nature of marriage, not just plural marriage but the idea that marriage exists in the next life, you can be sealed forever, it was also rejected by the traditional Christian community. So um – that's causing some internal dissensions. They're still dealing with the fallout, which you've probably already talked a little bit about, John C. Bennett and his – a – I don't know a good word to use for John C. Bennett, at least not in mixed company, so a – John C. Bennett is a – a – his apostasy and lies that he's told about how plural marriage is being practiced is being published all over the country, the press is picking it up and running with it, everyone loves it 'cause, you know, it sells, it's salacious and it sells, but it's also you know, so false, so much of it is just made up out of whole cloth but that's inflaming sentiments.

So you have that going on internally and – and you're going to have some very high profile apostasies surrounding these new doctrines that Joseph is teaching, plural marriage, eternal marriage, the idea that man was – has the

ability to progress and become like God – that was – that was mind blowing, a big deal and that God wasn't always God. I mean, in – in Christianity, I mean, the aseity of God is, it's the essential aspect of God, that God has always been God. For a Christian, you know, most Christians, anyway, that what they mean is that in the beginning there wasn't even time and space; there was nothing but God, just God. That leads, you know that quote that – to the effect that Saint Augustine was asked, well what was God doing before he created everything? He was creating hell for people who ask questions like that. But the – that is the most fundamental aspect of God to traditional Christians, that God has always been God, and so when Joseph begins to teach that there was some kind of progression whereby God became God, and, that that similar progression is open to – to us – and as we get exalted, God then takes a higher exaltation – that is, I mean, it's blasphemous to other Christians today. It is saying that the most fundamental nature of God as far as we understand it is, is, is wrong, and so it causes a lot of tension.

Now externally, they've always had, you know, some problems in – in Illinois but they especially have problems in late 1843 and a lot of this stems from the fact that – this is going to be a news flash to you guys, but some people sometimes get really passionate about politics and at times, they decide that they're going to hate people purely on the basis of what they believe politically. I know that wouldn't happen today, but in the past, in the past, there were times that people were so passionate about politics that they treated each other like garbage over it. So just imagine a world like that, and – and what's rapidly approaching is the – is the 1844 Presidential Election.

So let me set the stage here, very quickly. You have two major parties in 1844, you have the Democratic Party and then you have this Whig Party, the worst named party ever, like the hair club for men party. Yah, I mean, it – it derives its name from a – a the opposition party in England that was opposed to the power of the king in favor of the power of the Parliament. Well, anti – Andrew Jackson was America's first real populous president who had just this incredible amount of power because he had so much public support. He was a war hero, he was a common man, he drank a lot of alcohol, I mean, you know (overtalk) everything they wanted, and he – he started to be referred to

by his opponents essentially as King Andrew the First because he was – he was pretty dictatorial. I mean, in fact, you know, you have the most notable case was the Supreme Court case where, you know, when you study early American history, there are like so many times that you kind of, you know, put your hand over your eyes and say, oh man, I wish we – I wish that didn't happen.

Well this is one of the few times that you're studying American history and – and they got it right, and this is the court case of the Cherokee who were being forcibly removed from their lands granted them by a treaty. The Supreme Court ruled that the Cherokee can't be moved and Andrew Jackson has them moved anyway. So, you know, it's actually something like Justice Marshall has this ruling now let's see him enforce it. So – so he was acting in a way that is as if he didn't have any – anything stopping his power, any check to his power. So they developed the name of this party, the Whig Party.

Nearly all Mormons had voted as Democrats and voted in blocks as Democrats all the way back to Ohio. The Democratic Party was, at the time, the part of the individual farmer. It was a party that was much more open to religious pluralism so – so most Catholics that are arriving, they gravitate toward the Democratic Party whereas the Whig Party is far more – I get - these are all generalizations – you can all find I know a Catholic who was Whig, congratulations. But I'm talking about the generalization that – that there's a much more evangelical Christian strain among- among the Whigs. So you can see why that would also not push Latter-day Saints that way. The Whig Party is generally a party that is more powerful in cities; they're pro national bank, they're pro tariffs on things, they're pro manufacturing, all of those things – you know, if you were a poor farmer, I don't want my manufactured goods to cost more; I don't - I don't want my – my banking – so there's – anyway, there – there are the differences, at least for some of them.

So for the members of the Church, (overtalk) some make a transition in Nauvoo, at least Joseph Smith does, that's the problem because where Joseph goes, there (overtalk) might be surprised, you know, people are going to follow him. So Joseph had always been a Democrat and – and – and had

voted that way, and even in – in Missouri, it's actually a – a Whig politician that actually sparks the Mormon War in Missouri and so even though Governor Boggs is also a Democrat, and there could be a lot of angry feelings toward Democrats in Missouri, but there's no positive feelings toward Whigs either. (overtalk) And when the Latter-day Saints arrive in Illinois, because they're all known as reliable, Democratic voters, again, hard to believe that the Democratic Legislature of Illinois is like, come on in, let's give you a charter. I mean, again, it's – the reality is, politicians do things for political purposes all the time.

So early on in Illinois, the Whig papers and the Whig politicians were generally antagonistic towards Latter-day Saints because they represented this new voting block that's opposed to them. Well in 1842, Joseph Smith signals his willingness to vote for a Whig, a candidate for the legislature and that kind of begins this process. Also, as the 1844 election is approaching, people are pretty certain that the Democratic nominee, many people think it's going to be Martin Van Buren, so the same president, - yah, the incumbent, so – so that right – he's, he's like a Grover Cleveland would later – or would have been, because he was the president, and then he got – John Tyler became president – and William Harrison became president and then died and then John Tyler became president – the idea behind it was that he was the most prominent Democrat, he was probably going to win in convention, and so Joseph is, you know, he writes a letter to Martin Van Buren saying, you know, do you have anything else to say for yourself since we last met? But he wasn't expecting him to change.

On the other side of the ledger, the Whig Party is almost certain that their candidate's going to be Henry Clay, the great compromiser. He has had some correspondence with Latter-day Saints and even at one point provided some, you know, legal, you know, advice on things, but he's also a champion of the Constitution and he's a champion of doing what's right, at least publicly, (unclear).

So Joseph Smith in late 1843 really places his – his idea behind Henry Clay in the Whig Party, that the Democrats not only have done nothing for us, even

though we've been loyal to the party, the reality is, their probable president – they were wrong – but what they think who will be president at the time is on record saying he's (overtalk) not going to help them. So Joseph writes – Joseph Smith writes to all the declared presidential candidates, the people who had said they were going to stand for election, and – and one by one, they write back, giving him the same answer that Martin Van Buren had given them, that your cause is just but I can do nothing for you – not in the same words, but essentially saying I can't be bothered. You know John C. Calhoun, for instance, is like how could the President of the United States intervene in what is a local matter? which causes Joseph to be pretty irate. But the one that crushes Joseph is Henry Clay. So Joseph had actually given an interview in which he had said he was going to support Henry Clay.

Well for a few months in Illinois, these Whig newspapers that had been all antagonistic towards the Mormons in the state suddenly became pretty positive because, again, hard to believe someone would change their opinion just on the basis of politics, but that's what happens.

Well when – when Henry Clay responds that he's not going to do anything to help the saints either, it's devastating. Joseph writes him back, a letter, but it causes Joseph to make a very serious conclusion, two things that he does. One, he's going to declare himself to be a candidate for president and this isn't because he thinks he's going to win, like all third party candidates in American history, the point isn't to win, I mean it's great, I guess if you won, but the point is, to draw attention to the issues that matter to you, and Joseph does that. His party platform is incredibly radical for the time.

In 1840, slavery is just not a presidential issue. It's just not, and to give you an idea of how close both parties are on the idea of slavery, in the end, in 1844, the two candidates that are nominated are James K. Polk, a plantation owning, slave owner from Tennessee, and Henry Clay, a plantation owning, slave owner from Kentucky. So, I mean, while they had differing views on the expansion of slavery, the reality is most politicians knew to talk about slavery in your presidential campaign was death.

So Joseph opens his platform by attacking the fact that there are millions of people that are held in bondage in slavery because the skin that covers their spirit is darker than ours and it's – it's very radical.

It's fascinating because Joseph isn't making all these decisions in a vacuum, in isolation, right? Early in January of 1844 is when he gathers the quorum of the twelve, they've had their responses from these – these candidates and they're saying, who do we back? In good conscience, who do we vote for? And they didn't have a great option and so a decision was made, Joseph – so that's a short term solution to that problem, right? How do we back that? But the reality is, you know, Joseph doesn't expect to win, so what happens, and the other's a much more long term solution which really affects both of these sections of the Doctrine and Covenants, and that is that Joseph makes the determination that they need to leave the United States, that they need to leave the country and go somewhere else, and it's a tough thing for an American Latter-day Saint today to come to terms with. I think most American Latter-day Saints, you know they have a passionate love of their country and so it's hard to look back on these things from the past but the reality is, Joseph Smith has decided that American democracy is a failure, and it's a failure because it won't protect the rights of minorities. And when you're a hated minority group, then that means anywhere the Latter-day Saints move, it will always be more politically advantageous to treat them badly because they're a hated minority. So the idea is, we need to go somewhere where no one else is. It's, you know, we can – we can hardly be the hated minority when no one else is there, right? or at least, at least a much smaller population.

So they - so Joseph's going to take these efforts to do that – to establish a Council of Fifty which is this organization that is designed to – it's going to seek out where the Latter-day Saints are going to move to. So all of this is going on late 1843 and now early 1844, at the same time Joseph is, I mean he's – he's preaching publically some of the more radical doctrines that he's going to teach such as the King Follett sermon in April, and so you have some high level apostasies, the (largest?) of these is William Law. William Law is going too ostensibly differ with Joseph over plural marriage and over the idea that there's – mankind can become like God, the idea of the plurality of Gods,

and the idea that God himself progressed. This tension is going to lead to eventually the creation of the Nauvoo Expositor, which is a – a newspaper published in Nauvoo which attacks Church members by name, attacks their doctrines and points out multiple reasons why the Church is gone astray. Initially, William Law is going to found his own church, but that's actually pretty short-lived and later in life, he's completely - he's decided that all Mormonism is just above a farce and that he's left that.

The Nauvoo City Charter, so this is going to be part of – this is going to be something that will be certainly unique and different to the Latter-day Saints today, but remember the Democrats were actually pretty eager to get Latter-day Saints to settle in Illinois and not in Iowa because there was a whole bunch of Democratic voters moving in.

They grant a charter for Nauvoo that is incredibly broad and giving a great deal of power. Nauvoo has its own court system. Nauvoo is allowed to have its own militia. States have militias, counties have militia, but Nauvoo City has its own militia as of means of hey, we're not going to allow this kind of murder that happened in Far West and at Haun's Mill to happen again.

Well, the a – the charter granted the City of Nauvoo the ability to remove nuisances to the town. When this newspaper began publishing, it made all kinds of accusations that Latter-day Saints were committing adultery, that Latter-day Saints were embezzling tithing funds, and again, naming people by name. The City Council determines that this is a libelous press, meaning it's a press that's spreading lies. Now today, if someone's printing lies about you, you can still take them to court for libel and you get an injunction and then they'll stop putting things on their Facebook about you, but then, obviously, the laws were not as developed and so the City Council, and Joseph was the Mayor, they order the destruction of the press as a nuisance to the town. This sets off a – a series of events that will lead to Joseph Smith being arrested and placed in – in Carthage Jail.

And so for a timeline, the Nauvoo Expositor prints its first and first and only (overtalk) June 7<sup>th</sup>, and it's on June 10<sup>th</sup> when the Nauvoo Council votes this is a public nuisance and it's a public nuisance and they're saying we're – we



refuse to not publish, well, what do you do? You abate the nuisance. (overtalk) They destroy the press. They destroyed the press, that's what they did. They feel like they're on solid, legal grounds. They – first of all – if anyone knows that presses can be destroyed and that no one goes to jail for it, it's Latter-day Saints as they've experienced that, but the reality is, they point to multiple, legal instances of other cities were naming a press as a libelous press and removing it from the town. So far more common on the frontier were presses being destroyed simply because people didn't like what they were being printed, and even in Illinois itself, not even a decade earlier, there was a very highly publicized case in which an abolitionist printer, Elijah Lovejoy, had his press destroyed three separate times, and, in fact, was murdered the third time and there are no legal ramifications for this at all. Nobody was brought to trial for this. There's no – there's no legal ramifications and so the Latter-day Saints believe, look, we're operating under what our press says and again, they feel an urgency. Many of them felt like what caused the Mormon War in Missouri where so much death and destruction happened was that newspapers began publishing lies about what was going on in the Church, you know, and affidavits, for instance, from people like Thomas Marsh that claim – that are claiming things that are wholly untrue. Thomas Marsh claims in his affidavit that Joseph Smith plans to create an Indian alliance and then march on the Capitol of Missouri and after he takes Missouri he's going to march on the Capitol of Washington, D.C. I mean there's literally no evidence for this at all, but that stirs up animosity which leads to the mob violence. So they see – they feel like if we do nothing, they feel like if we do nothing, it's going to lead to mob violence. If we abate the press then we're within our legal rights because legally it says this is a nuisance.

Now, of course, the rest of Illinois and certainly there were antagonists and certainly William Law are not going to agree with them; they are going to see this as a violation of the freedom of the press. They didn't care so much when it was Elijah Lovejoy's press getting destroyed, but suddenly the new-found love of freedom of the press was going on in Illinois, and though Joseph was taken and arraigned before the local, Nauvoo court – by a non-Mormon Judge, by the way – a – they – the governor demands that Joseph be tried somewhere else, and so he demands that Joseph be tried in Carthage and at

first, Joseph is just - he and Hyrum, you know, Joseph writes back to the governor and essentially says we don't dare go because these people are saying they're going to murder us, these people are saying they're going to kill us, they're clearly not in control over the forces of this county, and so they'll cross the river, the Mississippi River into Iowa with the idea that they are going to leave and – and get out of Dodge. They're going to go west. The plan is for the Church to go west anyway; we're going to go first because if they feel like if they submit to this – this authority, that they could be killed.

What happens after Joseph crosses the river is there's word that the governor is now marching up to Nauvoo with his militia. Put yourself inside the minds of the Latter-day Saints in Nauvoo. The last time a governor marched to your capitol with militia is what happened in Far West where there was indiscriminate robbery and – and assault and murders and the destruction of property. It was awful, you know the extermination order in full force, and so these people who have gone through that trauma, they hear that Thomas Ford is marching on Nauvoo with an army, it is not irrational that their response is, oh my goodness, there we go again (overtalk); it's Haun's Mill all over again, yeah.

So they actually write to Joseph, several community leaders do and even Emma write to Joseph asking him to come back because they fear that the governor will come to Nauvoo and find that Joseph is gone and alright, let's burn the city down, they think that's what's going to happen next. And so Joseph will, in consultation with – with Hyrum and others, they'll make the determination to go back and they'll – they'll cross the river and come back and after they cross the river and come back, they'll make their march to Carthage and so it – it's a lot happening in the weeks leading up to this.

And Joseph seems to make statements over and over and over again that he seems to be getting the idea that you know what? If we go back – a -we're going like a lamb to the slaughter, (overtalk) at least according to one account, right? I mean he has the conversation with Hyrum, if we go back, we will be butchered. Yeah. And, you know, Hyrum wants to trust that they'll be fine if they go back, and clearly, Joseph is still trying to – he's still trying to,

you know, maintain his life. He's still, you know, but there's a foreboding that really is existing even before that, I mean he tells the Council of Fifty in one of the meetings, you know, he talks about how important it is to love people even if they aren't members of the Church, right, and he says, you know after I've used all of my means to – to raise a mind from its darkness and yet that man's still inclined to his darkness, yet he would be my friend every bit as much as if he had embraced it, and then Joseph says, you know, essentially, I can't remember exactly, but my only regret is that I won't be able to enjoy the fellowship of these, my friends, as long as I want to, right? He seems to know that things are drawing close.

And even in his meeting with the quorum of the twelve in March when he tells them, I – I hold all these keys, and if I die, they go with me. I need to give them to you. The very fact that he's giving those keys to the – to the quorum of the twelve, I mean it really caps off a process that had started in – in 1841, Joseph had started giving more and more authority to the quorum of the twelve and by 1844 he's giving them all of the keys of the kingdom and again, that seems to be this understanding that he has some kind of premonition that – that his death is coming soon.

Now, so now we shift our focus to – to June, late June of 1844. They arrive in Carthage, they're – they're facing these charges of riot and this – this destruction of the press and they get a bail given to them, yah, they're arraigned and they're – they're – it's a huge bail, I mean it's clearly, you know, it's exorbitant, it's an exorbitant bail, but they're able to raise it and so for them, when they first go to Carthage, the real fear is okay, we've got to get in and out of Carthage as soon as possible – as fast as possible, because this – there's so much animosity and and there's a lot of animosity in Carthage anyway, because Carthage was the county seat and it went from being the most populous city in Hancock County to not even being close because of Nauvoo, I mean, you know, you go from having a couple thousand people and being the largest city to being dwarfed economically (overtalk) by Nauvoo and its area, and so there's a lot of latent animosity in – in Carthage in Hancock County.

So no sooner are they bailed out that another claim is made against them and that is the charge of treason, that Joseph has called out the Nauvoo Legion illegally and – and therefore that would be treason against the State of Illinois. Well treason not only is a defense punishable by death, it's also an offense for which you can't be bailed out. So instead of quick arraignment – we'll go to Carthage and we'll get back home and I'll be, you know, be – I'll be in the Mansion House by this evening, they – their anticipated departure from Carthage doesn't happen because they are rearrested and this time confined without the ability to be bailed out; they're going to have to wait in jail until their trial.

So now we come to June 27<sup>th</sup>, the actual day. There are other people who have come and gone with Joseph and Hyrum, those are the only two who are held by the state, they can't leave, so we'd had people coming and going, but you have two apostles who choose to stay with them into that afternoon, yeah, John Taylor and Willard Richards are there and what really happens the morning of June 27<sup>th</sup> that – that kind of sets things in motion is from the beginning, the governor has seemed to misappropriate where the threat lies, right? He seems to think that the real threat to peace in Hancock County is the fact that the Nauvoo Legion exists, right? because it causes such dread among the local neighbors. Now we don't have reports of the Nauvoo Legion out burning down houses and killing people, but antagonists of the Latter-day Saints in the community were constantly talking about oh, they've got this military force and they say if we don't do what they say, they'll just come and kill us.

So the governor, he first, even before Joseph goes to Carthage, it's actually while he's on his way to Carthage, while he's on his way to Carthage, he receives an order from the governor for the Nauvoo Legion to surrender all of its state arms, meaning as an official militia of the state, they were given weapons, you know, for this state militia, and Joseph goes back to make sure that that order is – is followed.

Well, the governor, on the morning of the 27<sup>th</sup> makes the determination that the real threat to peace is the residents of Nauvoo, notwithstanding those

state arms, but he's going to go make sure that they've actually been surrendered, but he's also going to go give a talking to to those Mormons so that they know that this is mostly their fault. So he, what he does, is he takes his – his militia, the ones that he had promised to protect Joseph with, he takes them with him to Nauvoo. This is – this is seen, as John Taylor later saying, not only as a breach of faith upon the governor, but a desire, an attempt of his desire to insult us.

One of the reasons why they submitted was, the governor had promised that he would personally ensure that they would be safe. Well it's hard to be personally sure if you're no longer there. And you take your guard (overtalk) and you leave the Carthage Grays in charge of – so Carthage is very much an antagonistic town towards Nauvoo for all kinds of reasons, and as John Taylor describes it, he takes some of his troops with him to Nauvoo. He disbands other local groups, right, so you have, you know a Warsaw militia that's there. Well Warsaw's not exactly a pro-Nauvoo town either, right? And so – so you have a bunch of people that are mustered together to have weapons who are now disbanded, and I guess we'll just hope that (overtalk) I hope they go home. I mean, the reality is, it's a – an afternoon in the summer and so there's a lot – there's a real sense of foreboding that – that starts to take place, and then all throughout the remainder of the day, other people who were in the jail with them go out on errands to do different things, because they're still trying to prep for a trial, oh, so what's one of the ways that you can prep for a trial? Well one of the things that they are claiming is that the Nauvoo Legion was called out to destroy the press. Well, I guess we can just go ask the Nauvoo Legion, were you called to destroy the press? Well it seems like that would be an easy way to get witnesses.

So people go out, like Stephen Markham, when he tried to come back, he's met by a mob who meet him with bayonets and tell him they're going to kill him if he doesn't leave town. One by one by one people leave and they are not allowed to come back until you only have four people left in the jail.

The way John Taylor describes it, is that after they had their afternoon dinner, they send for a bottle of wine, very funny because when John Taylor talks

about this later in 18 – in the 1850s he already, I mean, I get it's apparently a Latter-day Saint pass time to try to justify past actions on the basis of what we do currently, so by the time he's talking about it in the 1850s, well the Church is – Brigham Young is speaking out much more and more about people wanting to live the word of wisdom, not just as a you know, don't use too much of it but kind of a more towards – they're nowhere near abstinence yet, but – but it was moving towards the idea of not drinking at all, of not smoking at all, it will be another fifty years before they get there, but they're moving in that direction, and so already, there are people who have tried to justify the fact that they had a bottle of wine in Carthage jail as, well, yah, they had one but that's because of the sacrament which wouldn't even be a justification for us today, but it was for them because they were still using wine for the sacrament, and John Taylor was pretty mad about it, I mean, because the implication is, so you're saying we did something wrong? He says, you know, it's been reported that we had this wine as a sacrament, it was no such thing. We had it because our spirits were unusually dull and languid and it was to raise their spirits. So, in other words, they drank for the same reason everyone did.

But the reality is, it's a representation of there is a real melancholy that has fallen over them. The governor has promised his protection. The governor is gone. It's incredibly hot in this – this upper room, and even the jailer who's on quite friendly terms with them, says to them, I don't like the feeling of what's going on outside. You guys need to move to the jail cell with bars rather than the nice, you know, the bedroom. And so they actually say, okay, well after dinner we'll do that. In the end, I don't think it would have mattered – any difference, no, it would have been just, you know, it would have been more trapped essentially, but you can tell that there's this kind of feeling of foreboding and then as that afternoon wore on, I think most Latter-day Saints are aware that John Taylor sings the song A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief – all seven verses, all of it, which is a very long song and it was a recent song and when he's done, you know, John Taylor says, the reason is that the song is a plaintive tune and it was very much in accordance with our feelings at the time, though we all felt ourselves very low. When he's done, Hyrum asks him to sing the song again but John Taylor says, Brother Hyrum, I do not feel like

singing. And Hyrum says, Oh, never mind, commence singing and you'll get the spirit of it. At his request, I sang the song again is what John Taylor says.

Well shortly after he finishes singing the song a second time, they see this crowd begin to rush towards the door of the jail. The guards outside the jail – they shoot. There are lots of reports of whether or not they shot at people, whether they shot in the air, whether they shot blanks, there's all kinds of conspiracy theories surrounding with what happens with the rush, the reality is, the two guards guarding the jail were not – they were not going to stop a mob coming in regardless. There are , at least some people said, well the mob had already come to them and said, you're either going to get out of our way or you'll be part of the problem, you know. What we do know is that no one in the mob is hit by a bullet as they're going inside. So whatever the shots were, they were ineffective at best, if not, you know, pointed in the air to try to scare people or blanks, whatever.

They rush up – up the stairs and they come to open the door. Now as John Taylor describes it, the lock and latch of that room don't even work, so the door actually can't really be locked which again, shows the rapport that they'd developed with this jailer, they are literally in a room that's not locked. They can leave whenever they want, they – not locked from the outside, they can't lock it from the inside. As they see them coming up the stairs, the men rush to the door and press against it because the door swings open into the room. Willard Richards is a large man – he's a gentleman of great carriage and had the ability to – his body against that door is, is substantial. He and Joseph and Hyrum, they press against the door, and as they're pressed against the door, the mobbers, they try to open it, so as they try to open it and push it, they assumed it must be locked 'cause this door is not moving, this door is not budging at all, and so the first evidence that this was not just a – this was not just another tarring and feathering, this is not just another hey, we're going to – we're going to beat Joseph up and leave him, this is – this is murder that they have on their minds. They begin to shoot through the door. They shoot through the keyhole of the door thinking that they have shattered a lock and then they can just push the door right open because they think that the lock is holding the door. Well, on the other side of the door, once that shot comes

through the door, the immediate response, of course, is to jump – no one expected a shot to come through the door. Willard Richards jumps back, Hyrum jumps back and as Hyrum jumps back directly in front of the door, another shot comes through the panel of the door, and that's the one that hits him in the nose, yeah, and – and is fatal, and according to John Taylor, he says, now I'm a dead man and he falls to the ground.

It is a devastating thing. Again, things happened so quickly, there's a reason why Willard Richards calls it these two minutes in jail. They went from singing the song to a mob rushing up the stairs to not knowing the intentions of that mob, to Hyrum being dead in less than a minute. It's already gone to that point. At this point, what's clear as Hyrum lay dead on the ground, as bullets are coming through the door, it's clear that the intention of the mob is to murder and so at this point, Joseph who goes to Hyrum and says oh my dear, poor brother Hyrum, he goes to the door which is still not all of the way open yet because this is still happening at once, Hyrum's shot, Joseph goes down to him, gets back up, Joseph goes to the door and he pulls out a six-shooter that he got from Cyrus Wheelock who had brought it earlier, which is pretty funny because John Taylor's like it's actually my gun, I'd given it to Cyrus Wheelock and now Cyrus now had given it to Joseph. Joseph opens the door a little bit, points the gun essentially blindly out into the hallway and shoots. Several of the barrels misfire, twice or three times, we're not sure, but this – and this is an event, an aspect of this that an antagonist of the Church will sometimes make a really big deal about, Oh, how is Joseph going as a lamb to the slaughter if he's shooting at people, that sounds like a gun battle, not like a – well, the reality of this is, you know, he's also covenanted to defend his friends and family to bloodshed even, you know, I mean he's – he has – he sees the intention is death and both John Taylor and Willard Richards reflect a great deal of surprise that the easiest way to kill four people in a room is to walk into a room and shoot them. So why don't they? Clearly, their plan was to open the door. They shot through the lock, their plan was to come through the door, why don't they come into the room. Well they don't come into the room because as soon as they do shoot through the door, a gun comes back out the door and shoots back at them, and while they're more than willing to murder someone in cold blood, they're not willing to risk their lives to do it. So



they don't ever actually come into the room. I know we see images that people have painted, you know, powerful images of the martyrdom that show people standing through the door and pointing guns, but according to the witnesses who were there, that doesn't happen, because they are cowards. They are so afraid that they might get shot by whoever's got a – is there another gun in there? Are they reloading that gun? What's going to happen? Because Joseph shoots out the door, it actually saves the lives of the people in there. They never come in. They put their guns around the doorjamb and blindly shoot into the room but they don't come into the room because they – because they're cowards. In fact, John Taylor talks about that and says, nothing but their extreme cowardice kept them from bursting into the room.

John – John Taylor is – he will talk about that eventually, he couldn't believe that they weren't just coming into the room. It was stunning to him, there were clearly a hundred of them, there's three of them left, and instead of just coming in and shooting them, they're still blindly shooting into the room and – and Taylor thinks at some point, they're going to realize we don't have a gun anymore. At some point they are going to open the door, aim and fire. So John Taylor – no one else has been shot yet, outside of Hyrum. We have, you know, Willard Richards standing behind the door using his cane, again, a big man, that door's not going to fly open regardless, and he's you know, knocking the guns down, John Taylor is also knocking guns down on the other side of the door and, in fact, that's what John Taylor says, the last thing he ever hears Joseph say, Joseph says to him, that's right Brother Taylor, parry them off as best you can.

Well, as they're doing that, and as the door, you know, is slowly inching more and more open, and again, John Taylor is thinking to himself, we've escaped thus far, but they're going to come in and kill us. Why haven't they killed us yet? He says, you know, the thought comes to him that even though they're on the second story, right? that there may be some friend on the outside. Maybe there is some faithful militia member or police officer or even a Latter-day Saint that's made it through the picket lines to make it there. Here is certain death, probable death if I go out the window, but here is certain death. And so he makes this decision that he's going to leap from the window. The problem

is, for those of you who have ever been to Carthage Jail, the door is roughly in line with the window. So where all these guns were protruding into the room and shooting blindly, the path of fire is directly to where the window is. As John Taylor goes to make the spring for the window, he's shot multiple times. He's shot in his arm, he's shot in his hip, he's shot in his knee and shot four – well he's shot – he's shot once as he's going for the window and then he's shot multiple times after he hit the floor so he's still in the rake of fire. John Taylor will come to believe, because as he was going to leap out the window, he was shot and he says he loses all power of motion and as he's shot he seems to feel like he's going to be falling out but then through some miraculous power, falls back into the room rather than out. He will later, when he sees his crushed pocket watch, assume that the pocket watch must have stopped a bullet and a bullet pushed him back in, but forensic eyes looking at it now, see that that was probably just him smashing it against the window so when he was shot, because he does say I lost all power of motion, so he just boom, and really, it probably is a miraculous thing that brings him back into the room than rather than out the window where he would have been certainly murdered.

As he crawls under the bed, he's shot several more times and – and he's lying under the bed while the shooting is still going on. Almost right after that, Joseph is apparently going to make the same decision that in this room is obvious death, Hyrum's dead, John Taylor is probably dead, if I get out of the room, there is at least a chance, and so he goes to leap from the window.

What happens next is actually pretty – it's pretty difficult to determine. We have lots of different accounts of the murder, the actual murder of Joseph. Willard Richards believes that as Joseph is going to the window, that he's shot both from the outside and from inside, he's being shot from both directions and that when he hits the ground, he's dead, that he's shot and killed as he's going. But there are other accounts of people who say he's actually alive after he hits the ground and – and frankly, as a historian, it's very difficult to determine because the stories are so widely variant. In any case, within a few moments of – within a few minutes of Joseph leaping from the window or

attempting to leap from the window, he's – he's dead on the ground outside of Carthage Jail.

Surprisingly, Willard Richards is still alive. He's not completely unscathed, he does have a flesh wound to his ear, but he – he, you know, he's unscathed, and later, he and others would look at this as a fulfillment of prophecy, that Joseph had promised that there would come a day that he would stand in a hail of gunfire and see his friends fall to the right and left and he would be unscathed, and that's exactly what happens. What happens is that once Joseph goes out the window, there's a cry from the mob, he's out the window! he's out the window! The mob all rushes down the stairs. Willard Richards looks out the window, sees that Joseph is killed, and then he goes to leave and – and John Taylor cries out to him, Brother Richards, bring me along, and – and so Richards drags this mangled body of John Taylor to the upstairs jail cell that is steel bars and takes a straw mattress and puts it over the top of him and says, you know, I'm sorry I cannot do better for you, this may hide you and you may yet live to tell the tale but I expect they will return and kill me any moment.

Richards assumed that they would go downstairs, make sure Joseph is dead, and then come back up and make sure everyone else is dead. But when they're outside, a cry goes up, the Mormons are coming! The Mormons are coming! And, you know, like cockroaches, they scatter when the light hits, and this, the poignancy of the grief that happens afterwards is really palpable both for John Taylor and for Willard Richards. Willard Richards says to John Taylor, you know that Joseph's dead. And he says is it possible that they have murdered both Brother Joseph and Brother Hyrum? It cannot be and yet I saw them shoot them, and he raises his hands in the air and he says, Oh God, protect thy servants multiple times, and he, eventually will, you know, move John Taylor back out into the room and they will get moved to the Hamilton Hotel, eventually, and be treated for their wounds, but it's - it's a pretty devastating thing. John Taylor is wounded pretty badly even though the letter home says he's not wounded very badly, he's damaged pretty severely and it will be a while, in fact, the bullet in his knee, in his left knee is never removed,

so he will have a physical manifestation of this for the remainder of his life, have a cane.

Absolutely. So now we turn our attention to section 135, this – this closing testimony of Joseph Smith having sealed his testimony with his blood. You'll notice in the 1981 in previous editions of the Doctrine and Covenants it says, it was written by Elder John Taylor of the Council of the Twelve. What do we know from more recent scholarship?

Well, so in the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, one of the things they did was they changed the section headings to better reflect our scholarly understanding, and there were sometimes that we had things in section headings that were assumed but not proven, you know that were, well I think this is the reason why, and so, you know, it was a – it was a good faith effort to explain what it was about, and the determination was, was really made that we actually don't know that John Taylor is the author of this. If we talk a little bit about how D. & C. 135 came about, we are almost done with the printing of the Doctrine and Covenants. Joseph is proofing it before he goes to Carthage. I mean It is – they're ready to print the volume and then Joseph goes to Carthage and is murdered. Well, in the newspaper, you know, less than a month after that, is published this tribute to – to them.

And so later, Heber J. Grant, in 1933, in a conference said, and he didn't say it definitively, he said that I've always believed that John Taylor, you know, I've been led to believe or I've been told that John Taylor penned D. & C. 135. And so after that we went, oh, well, it was John Taylor. But while John Taylor was alive and Willard Richards was alive, no one actually said he was the author. I'm sure he endorsed everything that was in it. It's hard to tell because the other explanations we're getting were all coming out in The Times and Seasons, which John Taylor is technically the editor of, but he's also missing half his hip, so I mean how quickly he returns to work to be able to start printing this, it's not known. It does seem like Willard Richards has a pretty good hand in some of it too because there are some of the things in there conform to the way Willard Richards would describe it, I would guess that it's a joint venture.

It seems like they're definitely getting input, but if you look at verse 2, it would be interesting wording for either John or Willard to be writing (overtalk) in verse 2, John Taylor and Willard Richards, two of the twelve were the only persons in the room at the time. The former was wounded in a savage manner with four balls but has since recovered and the latter, through the providence of God, escaped without even a hole in his robe. That's an interesting way to talk about yourself in 19<sup>th</sup> century – it certainly is at the very least the intent of the author if it is either of those men if it's those men collectively, the intent is to have distance, to put the focus on Joseph, not on (overtalk) rather than say I'm John Taylor and I'll tell you what happened to me. I mean John Taylor will certainly do that, he will talk about the martyrdom multiple times in his life, but in this instance, it seems that this tribute is meant to be anonymous because of that. It's beautiful.

Now you look at verse 3. This has to be – this has to be one of the most beautiful tributes as far as – if you want a 30,000 foot overview of Joseph the Prophet, verse 3 gives you kind of those highlights over – over what they call twenty year period of time, but technically, he sees the plates for the first time, but he doesn't get them out, he doesn't start translating – much less than that - until basically, what does Joseph accomplish in roughly seventeen years of life? So let's read verse 3. "Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it." That opening sentence, that's a pretty bold statement.

Yes, and obviously, you know opens up for the criticism of what about this person and this person and this person? Even to the point where people will criticize and say well what about Jesus? Well, I think we can all agree that Jesus is fine, as a Christian, so that's not the same thing, but for Latter-day Saints who believe that the restoration of the ordinances and keys are essential aspects of our progression to become like God, there are great prophets who have lived and saying that Joseph is greatest should not, you know, take away from Moses and Elijah, Moses and Elijah, they were fine coming to Joseph and giving Joseph their power, so I think that some of

those prophets we might name, they obviously gave their deference to Joseph in the sense that they came and visited him.

Yeah, previous dispensations they all seemed to be fascinated with the dispensation of the fullness of times, down the corridor of time. Now look at the backup for that statement, he's done more except for Jesus only, of all the other people who have lived, for the salvation of men, Joseph's done more. Well, in the short space of twenty years, we would argue, even less, in seventeen years, roughly, "he has brought for the Book of Mormon which he translated by the gift and power of God, and has been the means of publishing it on two continents; has sent the fulness of the everlasting gospel, which it contained, to the four quarters of the earth; has brought forth the revelations and commandments which compose this book of Doctrine and Covenants, and many other wise documents and instructions for the benefit of the children of men; gathered many thousands of the Latter-day Saints, founded a great city, and left a fame and name that cannot be slain. He lived great, and he died great in the eyes of God and his people; and like most of the Lord's anointed in ancient times, has sealed his mission and his works with his own blood; and so has his brother Hyrum. In life they were not divided, and in death they were not separated!"

It's fascinating, this idea of these two brothers, Hyrum being the second elder at this time, previously it would have been Oliver Cowdery. Essentially, he's a co-prophet if you were to use that language, Joseph was elevated in a status that no one else has had, but Oliver in the early church.

Now here we get some added detail to this story in verse 4. "When Joseph went to Carthage to deliver himself up to the pretended requirements of the law, two or three days previous to his assassination, he said: 'I am going like a lamb to the slaughter.'" He seems – all the stars have seemed to align for him and he realizes this might be the end, this is probably the end (overtalk) and you'll notice he kind of, the very fact that the author or authors of this are saying the pretended requirements gives you an insight of what they think of the so-called legal proceedings that led to his death were right – "the pretended requirements," the wording gives that away. You'll notice that the

same morning – so this would be back on June 24<sup>th</sup>, "when Hyrum had made ready to go said, was to the slaughter? yes, for so it was - he read the following paragraph, near the close of the twelfth chapter of Ether, in the Book of Mormon, and then turned the leaf down upon it." So he's reading from what we would call in our scriptures today, 'cause keep in mind, the verses and the chapters in the book of Mormon that they're using, they don't exist; it's just paragraphs, so it's not until the 1879 edition with Orson Pratt where we finally get chapters and verses and all of that, so from our Book of Mormon today, he's reading Ether 12 verse 37 through 38 which, wow, what a fascinating place to go in that setting, yeah and I think also demonstrate - demonstrate the fact that these – how certain they were that the Book of Mormon was the word of God, I mean, as, you know the arguments that Joseph is merely a charlatan and that he's invented all of this in order – there's – there's just no evidence for that, I mean, if you want to talk about what historical evidence is, non Latter-day Saints historians will not make the argument that Joseph Smith was just lying to everyone from the beginning about everything, because we have tens of thousands of documents related to him – journals, letters, and they all demonstrate that Joseph really believed he was called by God and that the Book of Mormon really was from God.

Now to an atheist, secular historian, that doesn't mean that they were, but there's – there's a big difference between someone who really believes they were called by God and is acting in that faith, and someone who knows that they are lying to everyone. They never have any plates, I never – I'm just – I've got this over on 'em, it's a good thing we're going to read from this fraudulent book here before we go off as a lamb to the slaughter.

Yeah, Elder Jeffery R. Holland gave a gave a talk in General Conference many years ago, (overtalk) he says this is the very book that – that Hyrum read from. Listen to these words from that passage in Ether chapter 12. "And it came to pass that I prayed unto the Lord that he would give unto the Gentiles grace, that they might have charity. And it came to pass that the Lord said unto me; If they have not charity it mattereth not unto thee, thou hast been faithful; wherefore they garments shall be made clean. And because thou hast seen thy weakness, thou shall be made strong, even unto the sitting down in

the place which I have prepared in the mansions of my Father. And now I ...bid farewell unto the Gentiles; yea and also unto my brethren whom I love, until we shall meet before the judgment-seat of Christ, where all men shall know that my garments are not spotted with your blood. The testators are now dead, and their testament is in force."

We have – it's a powerful witness to both the Book of Mormon and to their faith and to the purity of both Joseph and Hyrum's motives. So this is a very sobering section. I just love the beauty that we find in the doctrines here and I love the fact that the names that we have in these two martyrs are just so beautiful. Joseph comes from the Hebrew meaning to add to, or even to gather, and when you think about his role of adding to the restoration and gathering people and Hyrum's name is very fascinating, that means my brother is exalted. And I think that's a great testament to what we know about both Hyrum and Joseph and all those who have trusted in God, and I have a personal connection to all this. My name is Taylor, I'm named after John Taylor; he's my great, great, great grandfather and I feel a love for all those who in the past named and unnamed who were faithful to God and endure to the end to bring forth all this truth to all of us.

I think one thing I'd like to share with people, is on the anniversary of the martyrdom ten years later in Utah, and while they are again now experiencing new, increased persecution, they meet together and they have a meeting and John – John Taylor speaks at that meeting. Now he's given multiple accounts, Willard Richards has given multiple accounts, Willard Richards actually passes away in 1854 and really so just John Taylor was the only one left that was there when Joseph was murdered, and I'd like to share part of the testimony that he gives. He's going to talk about the fact that people have said wonderful things before, but this is what he is going to say:

"I was blessed to be associated with Brother Joseph Smith. As President Young said he knew him, so did I. I've been with him under all kinds of circumstances. When thick clouds of darkness gathered around and earthquakes seemed to bellow and threaten destruction, when the forces of the earth were rallied against him and also in times of prosperity, I've hear



him, as many of you have, speak in public to advance the principles of eternal truth and plead to the people to observe the laws of God and to keep his commandments that they might be prepared for a celestial inheritance.

But I have also been with him in private council, so I have had the opportunity of becoming acquainted with his feelings, his ideas, his views and with his morality, with his truthfulness and with his integrity, and I know that he was a good man, that he was an honest man, that he was a man of integrity and he was a prophet of the Lord and that he lived in that capacity and that he died in that capacity and he maintained his integrity to the end.

I was not only with him living, but I was with him dying and this is my testimony concerning Joseph Smith. I know before God and the holy angels; I do not think it, I know it. I know that he was a servant of God and a prophet of the Lord and he lived and died in the faith. I not only know it by my natural sight but by the revelations of God and I know by that same way that he yet lives because I have seen him and I know that he yet lives, and therefore, I rejoice in the testimony I can bear concerning him. I know that he will live and I also know that he's a friend of this people and watching over their interests, that he's a friend of President Young and watches over him and that he's most interested in the welfare, happiness and exaltation of the saints of the Most High, and having a knowledge of these things, sustains my mind and comforts my heart and strengthens me in the faith of a new and everlasting covenant and in the principles of truth that we continue to hear.

I rejoice myself exceedingly to be associated with brethren such as I am with at the present time – men that fear God and keep his commandments, men's whose first desire is to keep the law of God and to roll forth his purposes to the benefit of the human family in order that they might be prepared by and by, to enter into a more extensive field and participate in the blessings that wait for them."

He has more I could read, but I thought I'd share that part just as a means of thinking about the Prophet Joseph Smith and his sacrifice. No doubt all of you, at some point in your life, are going to have someone tell you that they don't think Joseph was a prophet, that they've read something that's

convinced them that oh, Joseph wasn't really – really who he said he was, or if only you've read what I've read, then you wouldn't believe, that it will often come across like that. If only you had the knowledge that I have, then you wouldn't believe, they'll say.

But John Taylor's testimony is one that stands above all of those people who would be critical of Joseph. Whoever it is that you will ever meet who will speak ill of Joseph throughout the remainder of your life, that person I don't care how wonderfully read they think they are, they will not have known Joseph personally the way John Taylor did, and unlike John Taylor, they will not have had four gunshots or bullet holes in them because of him

I know that there are times that people have questions that can't be answered and it causes us difficulties in our soul, but I hope you can work towards John Taylor's testimony and say the people who knew Joseph best, the people who actually sacrificed, the people who knew him personally, they were certain he was a prophet of God, and maybe allow that testimony to refute those of people who claim to have some kind of inside knowledge, because the people who knew him best, they are certain he's a prophet of God.

So as we come to the close of this first part of – of our episode this week, discussing section 135 and the events leading up to and surrounding the martyrdom, our invitation to – to each of us, to all of us, is to turn heavenward and recognize that Jesus Christ stands at the head of this work and he is the one who called the Prophet Joseph, and for whatever reason, he is the one who required both Joseph and Hyrum to seal their testimony with their blood on that occasion and were promised that the day will come when – when we will meet them at the judgment bar of God when all truth is revealed, when – when all the pain is gone away and we get things as they really are, and that will be a glorious day. Millions shall know Brother Joseph again.

Want to leave our testimony with you that we know that God lives, Jesus is the Christ, and Joseph is their prophet who stands at the head of this dispensation, and we leave that with you in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

(music: Vocal rendition of "A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief")